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### Parallelism

Anyone who interprets Hebrew poetry must understand parallelism. This has been the case since the mid-eighteenth century, when Robert Lowth presented his lectures on the subject. Terms such as synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelism are common in introductions to Hebrew poetry written after the time of Lowth. They continue to be used but with some significant variations in meaning from what Lowth intended.

The language of parallelism doubtless will continue. However, the major thrust of the last decade has involved the development of better theoretical models for conceptualizing parallelism. Moreover, scholars have provided detailed poetic analyses of selected Hebrew texts using these new models. Before we summarize the most prominent of these recent developments in the analysis of parallelism, it is necessary to understand the seminal contributions of Lowth.

#### ROBERT LOWTH

Robert Lowth's lectures marked a major advance in understanding "the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews," and they remain seminal in virtually every discussion of Hebrew poetry. Nearly two hundred and fifty years after he wrote his lectures, one finds reference to them in scholarly monographs, in detailed articles reporting research on the most technical aspects of parallelism, and in introductions to the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. Lowth argued that the dominant feature of that literature "consists chiefly in a certain quality, resemblance, or parallelism, between the members of each period; so that in two lines (or members of the same period) things for the most part shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other by a kind of

rule or measure.”<sup>1</sup> For Lowth, parallelism was the hallmark of Hebrew poetry.

In order to appreciate fully the significance of Lowth’s lectures, it is important to identify three simple factors that have often been forgotten. First, he was participating in a long-standing debate regarding the relationship of poetry and prophecy as well as a discussion of the origins and purpose of poetry. Put another way, his assessment of Hebrew poetry involved other important topics in Hebrew Bible studies, especially the nature of prophetic literature, which he maintained was poetry, as were the psalms. He had not set out to revolutionize the understanding of Hebrew poetry.

Second, following Lowth’s two introductory lectures comes what, in the English edition, is called the “first part,” a lecture on meter. This section recognizes the problems of attempting to discern meter in Hebrew poetry. In the published edition of the lectures, there is an appendix disproving Bishop Hare’s metrical system known to Lowth’s audience. Lowth’s own views on meter seem not altogether clear, as is exemplified by his observation that within the parallelism one “apprehends a considerable part of the Hebrew metre.”<sup>2</sup> It would appear that, for Lowth, meter and parallelism were integrally related. Since he focused on the line (and the relationship of lines to each other) and since much of Hebrew poetry yields lines of reasonably regular length, it is not surprising that he suggested relationships between parallelism and meter.

Third, it is only in the third part of his tome,<sup>3</sup> on the “specific species” of Hebrew poetry, that Lowth develops the notion of parallelism. In lecture 19, which is part of his discussion of prophetic poetry, he discusses synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic (or constructive) parallelism.

Lowth’s division of parallelism into three basic types remains dominant in virtually every introductory discussion of Hebrew poetry published through the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Of these three types, synthetic parallelism had, until the last decade, received the most attention. Discussion of synthetic parallelism usually amounted to a series of refined distinctions to explain the diverse ways the parallel lines were really not “true” parallelism.<sup>5</sup> The author of one helpful description of Hebrew poetry suggested that his own work was merely an “elaboration and enrichment of Lowth’s viewpoint.”<sup>6</sup> As we will see, this situation has changed substantively in the last decade.

## BASIC NOMENCLATURE

The nomenclature used in the discussion of Hebrew poetry has been less consistent than the fundamental concept of parallelism. Scholars have used diverse terms (e.g., stich, line, hemistich, verset, colon) to name the two entities that correspond with each other to constitute the parallelism. Throughout this work we will refer to each constituent part of the parallelism as a colon or line. A relationship of various sorts, grammatic or semantic, between lines constitutes parallelism.

Even the concept of the line in Hebrew poetry has become the focus of debate.<sup>7</sup> Some contemporary analysts use "line" to refer to bicolon or tricolon (Alter, Collins, Kugel, and Pardee), while our practice follows that of Berlin, Geller, O'Connor, and Watson. Part of the debate has hinged on whether or not one was identifying the line through an identification of stress. It is generally agreed, however, that the colon is the basic unit (not the bicolon) and that it most frequently occurs together with one or two other *cola*.<sup>8</sup>

The delineation of lines often presents problems. That is, it is not always obvious where a colon begins and ends, since few ancient Hebrew manuscripts have set out Hebrew poetry in the lineation of our modern critical texts or translations. There is additional terminological variation beyond that associated with the use of line. Some will use the term "verse" to refer to the basic unit, whether a single colon or more. We will generally avoid the term "verse." In fact, we will contend that there is no basic or fundamental Hebrew poetic unit other than the line. It seems to us more helpful to distinguish the separate *cola* in whatever combination they occur rather than to assume any basic or ideal combination, such as the bicolon.

The bicolon, or two-colon unit, occurs most frequently. It is sometimes called a couplet or line-pair. While this is the most typical combination in Hebrew poetry, there are other units. Monocola even exist—for example, Ps. 1:1. The presence of monocola suggests that parallelism is not the only factor in the creation of Hebrew poetry. While a monicolon does not have a direct relationship to another line, it does provide variation to other units—for example, a bicolon—and thus creates contrast with the more frequent parallelistic structures.

Before we turn to the bicolon, a word about other combinations is important. The tricolon, a combination of three *cola*, appears fre-

quently enough that all readers should anticipate finding this three-line unit in Hebrew poetry. A tricolon appears in the familiar opening to Psalm 100.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.  
Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come into his presence with singing.

Although some have suggested that the bicolon is the basic unit, even when considering a tricolon, this contention is problematic. Stephen Geller understands the tricolon as a sequence of interrelated bicola (A + B and B + C) or three lines understood as a monocolon plus bicolon.<sup>9</sup> However, the example from Psalm 100 illustrates a parallelism that surely is best understood as A / A' / A'' (cf. Hos. 5:1). There are other significant examples where both semantic and grammatic reasons support three parallel lines (cf. in the examples the discussion of Ps. 1:1, p. 93 below).

The consensus among scholars is that there are indeed multi-colon units even beyond the tricolon. Watson<sup>10</sup> provides examples of some of these combinations of cola beyond the tricolon. In some cases one could contend that instead of a tetracolon (or, as Watson calls it, a quatrain), one has either two bicola or even a tricolon plus a monocolon. However, when semantic and grammatic reasons are introduced into the discussion, there is no reason in principle that should preclude finding various multi-colon combinations.

The bicolon (more than one bicolon = bicola) is the most frequently occurring combination, for example,

It is good to give thanks, O LORD,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High.  
Ps. 92:1

A short pause is implied at the end of “LORD” and a longer pause after “Most High.” This can be graphically represented in the following manner: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ // . The single slash indicates the short pause and the double slash indicates the longer pause.

### SYNONYMOUS, ANTITHETIC, SYNTHETIC PARALLELISM

We turn now to Lowth’s description of parallelism. Both citations from Psalms in the previous section exemplify what Lowth would have

called synonymous parallelism. He considered this “species” of parallelism the most sublime.<sup>11</sup> It “consists chiefly in a certain equality, resemblance, or parallelism” where “the same sentiment is repeated in different, but equivalent terms.”<sup>12</sup>

By way of contrast, antithetic parallelism “is not confined to any particular form; for sentiments are opposed to sentiments, words to words, singulars to singulars, plurals to plurals.”<sup>13</sup> Lowth takes examples from Prov. 27:6-7, which includes two antithetical bicolon. The “but” reinforces the semantic antithesis for the English reader.

The blows of a friend are faithful;  
But the kisses of an enemy are treacherous.  
The cloyed will trample upon a honey-comb;  
But to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.<sup>14</sup>

The concluding bicolon of Psalm 1 in our examples also illustrates what Lowth would have called antithetic parallelism.

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Lowth calls the third “species” of parallelism “synthetic.” He defines it as syntax in which “sentences answer to each other, not by the iteration of the same image or sentiment, or the opposition of their contraries, but merely by the form of construction.”<sup>15</sup> Lowth recognized that cola could be related even if there was no semantic parallelism. He offered Hos. 14:5-6 (Heb., 14:6-7) as an example:

I will be as dew to Israel:  
He shall blossom as the lily;  
And he shall strike his roots like Lebanon:  
His suckers shall spread,  
And his glory shall be as the olive-tree,  
And his smell as Lebanon.

In these verses there is neither apparent semantic synonymity nor antithesis; rather, in Hebrew the lines are of similar length and involve other kinds of semantic development, and grammatical devices that enforce parallelism, for example, simile. Furthermore, Lowth and his followers have used the repeated bicolon in Amos 1 and 2 to illustrate synthetic parallelism that involved repetition but no antithesis or synonymity.

For three transgressions of . . . . .  
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment . . .

Lowth's recognition that parallelism went beyond the semantic levels presaged the developments that have emerged in the last decade.

There was, however, a problem with the variety of constructions designated as synthetic parallelism as well as the more general issue of what was to be regarded as the basic features of parallelism. As a result, Lowth may be credited with much of the confusion that derives from the term "synthetic parallelism." He suggested that synthetic parallelism occurs where neither semantic antithesis nor synonymy exists but where there are formal ties (grammatical and metrical) between *cola*. Unfortunately he neglected to distinguish adequately a series of issues that certainly should be clear by now, even if they were not when George Gray wrote his major critique of Lowth's synthetic parallelism over sixty years ago.<sup>16</sup> Synthetic parallelism<sup>17</sup> had become a summary category for everything in Hebrew poetry that did not belong to synonymous or antithetic parallelism. Lowth's third type of parallelism did seem necessary, since it is clear that varieties of parallelism beyond semantic antithesis and synonymy exist. Both Lowth's awareness of this fact and the subsequent attempts to develop the category of synthetic parallelism are major factors that have generated much of the last decade's work on parallelism.

Lowth's lectures gave a broad definition of parallelism, but the definition lacked precision. He did not have at his disposal the linguistic tools that would have enabled him to articulate carefully the interrelationship of semantic parallelism with other types of parallelism. He could identify the three types of parallelism within a single text because he understood that at the root of parallelism was the idea of correspondence. His categories permitted him to identify the mingling of diverse parallelism within a single text. Psalm 14:1-2 illustrates the shifting from one type of parallelism to another. The *bicola*, according to a Lowthian perspective,<sup>18</sup> shift from synthetic to synonymous:

Fools say in their hearts,	
"There is no God."	<i>synthetic</i>
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds,	
there is no one who does good.	<i>synonymous</i>
The LORD looks down from heaven	
on humankind,	<i>synthetic</i>
to see if there are any who are wise,	
who seek after God.	<i>synonymous</i>

Use of these identifications does not allow one to identify grammatical elements that are clear in the Hebrew text, for example, contrasting verbal and nonverbal cola. They do not enable the reader to see the relationships between the repeated "there is no . . ." (*'ēn*) in the first synthetic and synonymous bicola or the repetition of God (*'ēlōhîm*) in the first and last bicola. More important, these Lowthian categories do not assist the interpreter in establishing from the beginning of this psalm its major semantic antithesis between the fool and the deity.

### NEW UNDERSTANDINGS

The term "parallelism" continues to be used to describe the relationship between cola. New terms such as "matching," "intensifying," and "seconding" have emerged to clarify the kind of correspondence meant by parallelism. New concepts, largely derived from linguistics, have enabled us to move beyond Lowth's categories in fundamental ways. The first such development is the fact that we can no longer equate parallelism and Hebrew poetry. The second development consists of drawing our attention from the poetic line to the "unit of sense." This entails both greater attention to individual words, sounds, and forms, as well as to the connections between these elements. After looking at these developments, we will elaborate some of the different aspects<sup>19</sup> of parallelism, namely, grammatical and semantic parallelism.

First, until the last decade few would have questioned the equation: Parallelism equals poetry in Hebrew. Lowth may have implied that parallelism existed in prose as well as in poetry, but the dominant thrust of his work suggests that where parallelism is found, there is Hebrew poetry. However, Kugel has pointed out that Hebrew prose yields a variety of features that may be termed parallelism. For example, one may examine the following prose from Genesis 22. When it is set out on the page as poetry, one can readily observe the correspondence between lines.

I will indeed bless you,  
and I will make your offspring as numerous  
as the stars of heaven  
and as the sand that is on the seashore.

Gen. 22:17

In addition, Kugel displays Num. 5:12-15 in parallel lines.<sup>20</sup> In fact, as he notes, there are parallel structures in every telephone book in the

world! Lists provide excellent examples of lines that may be understood as parallel.<sup>21</sup> Some lists indeed function in poetic texts to further the poetic effect (Ps. 148:7-13), but not all lists are poetry.

Moreover, Kugel observed that some poetic texts include lines that are difficult to identify as parallel on almost any grounds. Psalm 119:54 presents two lines that can hardly be designated parallel: “Your laws were my songs/ in my dwelling place//” (Kugel’s translation). It has been argued in a study of early Hebrew poetry that 12 percent of the corpus exhibits nonparallel lines.<sup>22</sup> In sum, an easy equation between poetry and parallelism is no longer possible.

Most contemporary interpreters of Hebrew literature agree that poetry and prose are on a continuum. However, contending that poetry and prose are best understood on a continuum is not to suggest that we must abandon the distinction between poetry and prose.<sup>23</sup> There are pieces of Hebrew literature—some refer to texts like Genesis 22—that use parallelism and are terse or even paratactic—qualities often associated with poetry. But no one would contend that Genesis 22, the “binding of Isaac,” is poetry. A reader’s identification of a text as poetry is determined by a variety of complex factors. It would take us much too far afield to review the diverse perspectives surrounding this notion of a poetry-prose continuum. It is important to discard our often simplistic ideas of the distinctions between poetry and prose when coming to Hebrew poetry, whether the distinctions are between parallelism and no parallelism, “high” and “low” style, or rhyme and no rhyme.<sup>24</sup>

As indicated in chapter 1, most readers rely on the format of the printed page, whether looking at the standard critical edition of the Hebrew text or at some English translation, to determine whether a text is prose or poetry. A prose text is printed from margin to margin, whereas poetic texts are indented so as to “look” poetic.<sup>25</sup> Such formatting makes the distinction between poetry and prose for most readers.

Although we will not attempt to make the case that any one particular text is or is not poetry, we must not ignore the issue, particularly as regards its importance for the assessment of a text’s meaning. Said another way, “Poetry and interpretation are not matters that should be dealt with separately; rather, a deeper sensitivity to the poetic character of a text can enhance our understanding, and attention to poetic features may aid the interpretive process and its results.”<sup>26</sup>

If parallelism is not coextensive with poetry in some straightforward

way, and if parallelism involves more than semantic synonymity and antithesis, then some new conceptual scheme is necessary. For some, the study of linguistics provides the basis for a new approach, one that moves beyond the poetic line to words, grammar, sounds, and syntax. As Berlin has said, "Linguistics is fast becoming the prism through which poetry is viewed."<sup>27</sup> She correctly observes, however, that "if the grammatical aspect provides the skeleton of the parallelism then the lexical and semantic aspects are its flesh and blood."<sup>28</sup> Linguistics has assisted our precision in identifying the panoply of elements enriching parallelism, but not at the expense of ignoring semantics.

Linguistics includes the study of language, the principles of its organization, and the exploration of theoretical understandings. Since language is the medium of poetry, it seems appropriate that linguistics has become central to the interpretation of poems. This does not mean that extralinguistic factors are insignificant in the writing of or the interpreting of poetry. We saw in chapter 1 that there are various theories of poetry which, indeed, extend the understanding of a poem beyond a purely linguistic phenomenon.<sup>29</sup>

It has been said that the single poetic line is a "unit of attention" but not necessarily a "unit of sense."<sup>30</sup> Those discussing Hebrew poetry, while certainly interested in the line, have turned to the diverse elements that make up both units of attention and units of sense. The fact that parallelism is so central to Hebrew poetry demands attention to the word as well as to the way words are linked. Attention to these matters is accomplished through turning to what may be termed grammatic and semantic parallelism.

Recent scholarly work on Hebrew poetry has advanced our understandings of grammatic parallelism.<sup>31</sup> These studies have identified syntactic, morphologic, and phonetic forms of parallelism. One of the earliest studies of the last decade, O'Connor's, examined word order (syntax) in each poetic unit. With diverse nomenclature the constituent parts in each colon—subject, verb, object, and modifiers—were identified. Isa. 9:6 (Heb., v. 5) illustrates a bicolon where each colon includes a subject, a verb, and a modifier:

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;

On many occasions the grammatic parallelism coincides with the meaning or semantic parallelism, as in the Isaiah example. Child and

son are synonymous terms, the verbs convey a sense of equivalence, and the prepositional phrase is identical. Repetitive parallelism, such as the prepositional phrase “to us,” should not be neglected. Even when repeated at some distance, repetitive parallelism brings together every level of equivalence—semantic as well as several levels of grammatical parallelism (morphologic, syntactic, and phonetic).<sup>32</sup>

However, the relationship of semantic and grammatical parallelism is not always immediately apparent. Observe Ps. 111:5 (Berlin’s translation):

Food he gives to his fearers;  
He remembers his covenant forever.

In both cola, the word order, although slightly different in the Hebrew, includes a subject, a verb, an object, and a modifier. The semantic parallelism, despite grammatical equivalence, is not transparent. Can remembering a covenant and giving food be understood as identical or similar activities? The grammatical parallelism enforces the correspondence between the lines. But what of the meaning?

Berlin provides an answer that derives from linguistics. She has borrowed from linguistic studies the notions of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships.<sup>33</sup> If one understands the relationship between lines or phrases as one in which the thought expressed in the first colon continues into the second colon, one may speak of a syntagmatic relationship. On the other hand, if one understands the relationship between lines or phrases as one in which the thought expressed in the one colon substitutes for a line or phrase in another colon, then we understand a paradigmatic relationship. Syntagmatic relationships continue or advance the relationship. Paradigmatic relationships substitute. Her translation of Isa. 40:9 serves as a good illustration of both.

Ascend a high hill, herald to Zion;  
Lift your voice aloud, herald to Jerusalem!

One ascends the hill and then the voice is lifted. There is a continuation, a sequence of action. One can then say that the relationship of the actions in the bicolon is syntagmatic. On the other hand, the herald to Jerusalem substitutes in the second colon for the herald to Zion in the first colon. These are certainly meant to refer to the same individual. In other words, it is not one herald going up the hill and an-

other lifting a voice, since Zion and Jerusalem are identical entities. The one substitutes for the other. We can say, then, that the addressees in this bicolon function paradigmatically.

To return to Ps. 111:5, the grammatic parallelism assisted us in seeing the correspondence through the essentially equivalent syntax in each colon. At the semantic level the correspondence is not transparent, because the relationship between giving food and remembering a covenant are not synonymous, nor are they antithetical. If we consider the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships, however, we gain new perspectives. The notion of giving food to those in a relationship with the LORD (the ones fearing God) may be easily extended by the expression of the remembering of a relationship, namely, the covenant. The interpreter is reminded of the covenant meal in Exod. 24:11 at which Moses and the chief people of Israel “ate and drank” with God.

### GRAMMATIC, MORPHOLOGIC, SEMANTIC PARALLELISM

Grammatic parallelism may function at any of the diverse levels of language. In the current discussions of Hebrew poetry, there are different ways of distinguishing the parallelism we have chosen to group under the category of grammatic. Some will separate grammatic from phonetic (or phonologic) elements, even going so far as to understand sound in Hebrew poetry as something entirely distinguishable from parallelism itself.<sup>34</sup> Others we have mentioned limit grammatic parallelism almost exclusively to syntactic levels.<sup>35</sup> Still others, such as Berlin, who have been influenced strongly by linguistic theorists such as Roman Jakobson, will distinguish grammatic, lexical, and semantic as well as phonologic.

Because of the way they are translated in English, morphologic parallelisms are difficult for the non-Hebrew reader to identify. The simplest example of the problem can be observed by noting that in English, gender is not indicated by different morphologic endings. On the other hand, Hebrew nouns indicate gender by different endings for masculine plurals as well as for feminine singulars and plurals. Despite the fact that some of these morphologic parallelisms are difficult for the non-Hebrew reader to recognize, one needs to be aware of the tremendous range of options that Hebrew poetry had at its disposal to further parallelism. Morphologic contrasts and equivalences do not call attention to word order but to the substitution of words in one

colon for functionally equivalent words in another colon. These contrasts or equivalences can be articulated through gender (masculine or feminine), number (singular and/or plural), definiteness ("the" or "a"), conjugation, tense, and a number of other elements. The following examples are illustrative of several kinds of morphologic parallelism that are observable to the English reader.

### 1. Number

The singular, "innocent individual," in the A colon is contrasted with the plural, "upright ones," in the B colon:

- A Think now, what innocent individual perishes;
  - B or where the upright ones have been ruined?
- Job 4:7\*

The singular, "father," is contrasted with the plural, "elders":

- A Ask your father, and he will inform you;
  - B your elders, and they will tell you.
- Deut. 32:7

### 2. Tense

The perfect in the A colon is contrasted with the imperfect in the B colon:

- A The LORD at the flood sat enthroned;
  - B The LORD sits enthroned, king forever.
- Ps. 29:10\*

### 3. Proper noun and pronoun

In the A colon, "LORD," a proper noun, is used, and a pronoun substitutes for "LORD" in the B colon.

- A Praise the LORD with the lyre;
  - B make melody to him with the harp of ten strings.
- Ps. 33:2

These morphologically diverse parallelisms draw our attention to the semantic correspondences. The semantic parallelism in each of the examples is enforced by grammatic parallelism.

Among some of the other types of morphologic parallelism more problematic for the English reader are the following: a masculine noun in one colon and a feminine noun in the other colon (Prov. 14:13; Jer 46:12), sometimes referred to as gender parallelism; a kind of voice or conjugational parallelism that uses an active construction in one colon and in the next a passive conjugation (Ps. 24:7).

While morphologic parallelism focuses more on the word or lexical element, other types of grammatical parallelism hinge on syntactic levels. One of these has been identified as gapping, ellipsis, or deletion. By paying careful attention to the individual words that make up each of the colons, one can notice that a word is missing, usually from the second colon. Nonetheless the force of that word in the first colon carries into the second colon. Again we examine the Deut. 32:7 example, which also exhibited morphologic parallelism:

Ask your father, and he will inform you;  
your elders, and they will tell you.

The imperative “ask” is not stated in the second colon; nonetheless its semantic force is presumed. Jeremiah 51:31 (Watson’s translation) serves as another example of gapping. The verb (“does run”) carries into the second colon. Just as runners run to meet runners, so do messengers run to meet messengers:

Runner to meet runner, does run,  
messenger to meet messenger.

Psalm 78:51 carries the force of the verb “struck” from the first colon to the second:

He struck all the firstborn in Egypt,  
the first issue of their strength in the tents of Ham.

“All the firstborn” and “the first issue of their strength” are equivalent.

These examples show how attention to syntactic matters assist the interpreter in identifying parallelism at work with and beyond the semantic level. At a semantic level in gapping one can also detect a number of paradigmatic elements. For example, the “firstborn” and the “first issue” certainly have a kind of paradigmatic relationship.

In addition to the above types of grammatical parallelism, we suggest that the interpreter capable of reading Hebrew be aware of phonetic

or phonologic parallelism and repetition. These features will enforce other aspects of parallelism. Berlin has developed the argument for phonologic parallelism. She defines it as “the repetition in parallel words or lines of the same or similar consonants in any order within close proximity.”<sup>36</sup> Sometimes one dimension of phonological parallelism is referred to as alliteration, that is, the repetition of a consonant. It has been observed that the letter “q” occurs eight times in the short span of Joel 2:15-16.<sup>37</sup> A variety of issues (historical and linguistic) associated with the Hebrew vowel system make assonance, that is, the repetition of a vowel, an even more debated issue. In any case, these phonologic dimensions of parallelism are especially difficult for the non-Hebrew reader.

## SUMMARY

In summary, several factors are essential for us to identify Hebrew parallelism and to use an understanding of it in the interpretation of poetry. First, Lowth was correct: parallelism is a matter of correspondence. There is, however, considerable variety in identifying what is at the heart of the correspondence. Some scholars demand that the correspondence be construed rather strictly, taking grammatical identity between A and B as the single criterion. This, of course, would rule out much of what Lowth deemed to be synthetic parallelism. One of the valuable recent contributors, E. Greenstein, contends that parallelism exists only where one has strict identity or repetition in the syntactic patterning of a sentence.<sup>38</sup> He relies entirely on grammatical identity at the level of deep structure.

Others delineate new categories to unravel what is at the heart of the correspondence. For example, Watson states that parallelism “belongs within a larger group of mathematical analogues and cannot be exalted to the rank of ‘the characteristic of Hebrew poetry.’”<sup>39</sup> His chapter on parallelism is divided into six categories: gender-matched, word-pairs, number, staircase, noun-verb, and “Janus” parallelism.<sup>40</sup> Geller uses another set of six categories to delineate parallelism: synonym, list, antonym, merism, identity, and metaphor. These various attempts at categorization use semantic and grammatic elements, but they seem to run the risk of being mere revisions of Lowth’s categories. They neither better state what is at the heart of the correspondence nor assist the interpreter in using the identification of parallelism to understand a poem better.

## PARALLELISM

We take a very broad understanding of parallelism. It occurs in the interaction of semantic and grammatical equivalence and opposition. The juxtaposition of an A and B provides the opportunity for an almost infinite number of correspondences. The equivalence or opposition within the correspondence may be furthered at grammatical and semantic levels. "A is so, and *what's more*, B is so"<sup>41</sup> is too limiting a description of the correspondence. A is related to B at a multiplicity of grammatical and semantic levels. The correspondence of A and B is not merely A + B, nor A > B, nor A < B. As one recent contributor to the discussion has said, "The whole [bicolon] is different from the sum of its parts because the parts influence and contaminate each other."<sup>42</sup> Parallelism is not something that is predictable, and no mechanical system or set of categories can confine it. Rather, we must carefully observe the individual words as well as their relationships at the level of the colon, multi-colon, and entire poem in order to comprehend the range of parallelisms utilized in the Hebrew Bible.